



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 7, 2011

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FCC EXPLORES WAYS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE RELIABILITY OF AMERICA'S COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS

Washington D.C. –The Federal Communications Commission today took another step to implement the recommendations in the National Broadband Plan by adopting a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) seeking public comment on ways to further strengthen the reliability and resiliency of America's communications networks. The recent tragic earthquake and tsunami in Japan are unfortunate, tragic reminders of the importance of maintaining communications networks that offer reliable and resilient service in the face of significant equipment or system failure, particularly during major emergencies.

Communications services, including broadband technologies, play a critical role in all elements of the Nation's society and economy. Overall, as the communications infrastructure migrates from older technologies to broadband technology, critical communications services will travel over a communications network infrastructure that may or may not be built to the high standards of legacy systems. The potential for differences in service reliability may be a major source of concern for the public safety, health care, energy and financial sectors, and more generally for consumers and businesses across America.

Today's action builds on the FCC's ongoing efforts to help ensure the reliability and resiliency of communications for the public, government, emergency responders, healthcare providers, and providers of other critical services such as electric power during natural or man-made disasters. In April 2010, the FCC sought comment on the survivability of communications networks when there is direct physical damage or failure of network equipment, or network overloads.

The NOI seeks comment on four specific areas of concern:

- Current efforts by industry to ensure continuity of communications service during major disasters;
- Existing reliability and resiliency standards for broadband communications networks;
- The FCC's role in promoting the reliability, resiliency and continuity of communications services; and
- The FCC's legal authority to act to ensure the reliability, resiliency and continuity of communications services.

The NOI also proposes to terminate two related proceedings -- the Survivability Notice of Inquiry the Commission commenced in April 2010 and the Katrina Panel proceeding that it started in 2006. If terminated, the records from these two proceedings would be considered in the context of this proceeding, where appropriate.

Public comments and reply comments are due July 7, and September 1, 2011, respectively.. Comments on the FCC's proposal to terminate the Survivability NOI and the Katrina Panel proceeding are due 30 days after publication of the NOI in the Federal Register.

Action by the Commission, April 7, 2011, by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 11-55). Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker. Separate Statements issued by Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker.

PS Docket Nos. 11-60 and 10-92; and EB Docket No. 06-119.

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